

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 17539

E.O. 11652: XGDS 3

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IT

SUBJECT: DE CAROLIS' COMMENTS ON HIS L'EUROPEO INTERVIEW

REF.: ROME 17362

1. EMBOFF MET WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC FIRST TERM DEPUTY MASSIMO DE CAROLIS AT LATTER'S REQUEST EVENING OCTOBER 21. DE CAROLIS WANTED TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE U.S. GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR A SYMPOSIUM ON THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION TO BE HELD AT THE HOOVER INSTITUTE AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY IN FEBRUARY-MARCH 1977. (THIS SUBJECT WILL BE REPORTED VIA MEMCON.)

2. DURING THE COURSE OF THE MEETING, DE CAROLIS SPOKE WITH ENTHUSIASM ABOUT HIS TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES. HE EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR EXPANDED CONTACTS BY HIS PARTY (ESPECIALLY BY THE YOUNGER GENERATION) WITH AMERICAN POLITICAL AND ACADEMIC CIRCLES. EMBOFF RAISED THE SUBJECT OF DE CAROLIS' RECENT L'EUROPEO INTERVIEW (REPORTED REFTEL.) DE CAROLIS SEEMED UNEASY IN COMMENTING UPON THE INTERVIEW AND ASKED FOR EMBOFF'S REACTION. EMBOFF INDICATED THAT DE CAROLIS WAS WELL INFORMED REGARDING AMERICAN OFFICIAL ATTITUDES REGARDING ITALY. EMBOFF EXPRESSED REGRET THAT DE CAROLIS FELT IT NECESSARY TO ATTRIBUTE AMERICAN OFFICIAL ATTITUDES TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN AND ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IN IDENTIFYING OUR ATTITUDES TOWARDS CRAXI AND THE SOCIALISTS (ALBEIT ACCURATELY) DE CAROLIS MAY HAVE GIVEN
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CRAXI A KISS OF DEATH.

3. DE CAROLIS INDICATED HE IS FRIENDLY WITH CRAXI AND IN HIS OPINION CRAXI IS BY FAR THE BRIGHTEST AND MOST CAPABLE FIGURE IN THE PSI. DE CAROLIS HAS SPOKEN WITH CRAXI SINCE THE INTERVIEW APPEARED. WHEN ASKED WHAT CRAXI'S REACTION WAS HE NERVOUSLY INDICATED THAT "CRAXI WASN'T OVERJOYED BY THE INTERVIEW, BUT AFTER DISCUSSING IT HE AGREED THAT IT WOULD NOT SERIOUSLY HURT HIM." COMMENT: WE RECOGNIZE THAT CRAXI'S VERSION OF THE CONVERSATION MAY BE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. AS STATED REFTEL, WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECTS IT WILL HAVE ON A FAR FROM SECURE CRAXI SECRETARYSHIP. END OF COMMENT

4. WHEN ASKED ABOUT WHAT THE REACTION WITHIN THE DC MIGHT BE TO HIS INTERVIEW, DE CAROLIS MADE IT CLEAR HE HAD LITTLE CONCERN OVER THE REACTION OF THE DC LEADERS. HE SAID HE FELT HIS PARTY NEEDED A "SHOCK", THAT IN HIS OPINION THE DC IS BECOMING A "NON-PARTY" THAT IS BEING RUN BY A NUMBER OF CLIQUES FOR REASONS OF PERSONAL POWER. IN DEFENSE OF HIS OUTSPOKENNESS AND HIS ATTRIBUTING CRITICISM OF THE DC TO U.S. OFFICIAL SOURCES, DE CAROLIS EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS HIS JUDGMENT THAT HIS STATEMENTS ARE GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR THE U.S. POSITION WHICH IS BADLY MISUNDERSTOOD BY THE ITALIAN PUBLIC AT LARGE. AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED THE ITALIAN PUBLIC WOULD WELCOME KNOWING THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS TRYING VERY HARD TO ENCOURAGE REAL REJUVENATION WITHIN THE D.C. HE SAID THAT OBVIOUSLY WE CANNOT PUBLICLY SAY THESE THINGS IN OUR OWN NAME AND WE CANNOT EXPECT TOO MANY DC POLITICIANS TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THEIR ELDERS. FORTUNATELY, HE SAID, HE WAS IN A POSITION TO BE INDEPENDENT AND COULD SAY THINGS THAT MANY OTHERS WOULD LIKE TO SAY BUT SIMPLY COULD NOT. WHEN EMBOFF INDICATED HE RISKED ISOLATING HIMSELF WITHIN THE PARTY AND THEREBY UNDERCUTTING HIS EFFECTIVENESS, DE CAROLIS ACKNOWLEDGED THE RISK INVOLVED BUT FELT IT WAS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THE "SHOCK" THAT HIS PARTY DESPERATELY NEEDED.

5. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S QUESTION REGARDING HIS ATTITUDES TOWARD THE AGNELLI SPONSORED HILTON MEETING (DISCUSSED IN HIS INTERVIEW), DE CAROLIS INDICATED THAT HE WAS RETHINKING CONFIDENTIAL

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HIS ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE AGNELLI INITIATIVE. HE SAID THAT HE HAD AN ALIBI FOR NOT ATTENDING THE FIRST HILTON MEETING SINCE HE WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY. HOWEVER, HE WOULD NOT HAVE ATTENDED ANYWAY SINCE HE FELT AGELLI WAS TRYING TO BRING TOGETHER TOO DIVERGENT A GROUP WITHIN THE D.C. DE CAROLIS EXPRESSED ANNOYANCE THAT DURING THE TWO DAY MEETING AT THE HILTON NOT ONE WORD WAS SPOKEN BY ANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS REGARDING THE DC'S ATTITUDES AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PCI.

DE CAROLIS SAID THIS IS A FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE FOR THE DC AND THE ONLY REASON THAT IT WAS NOT DISCUSSED WAS THAT IT WOULD HAVE CAUSED DIVERGENCE WITHIN THE BROAD SPECTRUM AGNELLI BROUGHT TOGETHER. DE CAROLIS SAID THAT HE HAS RECENTLY SPOKEN WITH AGNELLI AND INDICATED HIS DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEXT MEETING WHICH HE FELT MIGHT TAKE PLACE IN NOVEMBER. HE SAID HE MADE IT CLEAR TO AGNELLI THAT HE WOULD PARTICIPATE ONLY IF THE GROUP INVITED WOULD BE NARROWED TO INCLUDE ONLY THOSE WHO WOULD BE WILLING TO RALLY AROUND A CLEAR ANTI-PCI POSITION. HE INDICATED THAT AGNELLI DID NOT COMMENT ON WHETHER THIS COULD OR COULD NOT BE DONE AND, THEREFORE, DE CAROLIS IS RESERVING HIS JUDGMENT ON HIS FUTURE PARTICIPATION.

6. IN CLOSING, DE CAROLIS SEEMED TO BE CONCERNED THAT HIS INTERVIEW MIGHT HAVE CAUSED US EMBARRASSMENT. HE REITERATED THAT IT WAS HIS SINCERE BELIEF THAT HE WAS ADVANCING THE CAUSE OF THE U.S. HERE BY MAKING IT VERY CLEAR THAT WE WERE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF ISSUES NOT FULLY APPRECIATED BY ITALIAN PUBLIC OPINION. FURTHERMORE, HE IS ANXIOUS TO HAVE FREQUENT VISITS TO THE U.S. AND VERY MUCH WANTED TO STAY IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH U.S. OFFICIAL CIRCLES AS WELL AS TO CARRY HIS MESSAGE TO AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER CULTURAL LEVELS.

7. COMMENT: DESPITE DE CAROLIS' EXPLANATION, WE DOUBT THAT HE HAS DONE US A FAVOR WITH EITHER THE DC OR CRAXI. IN GENERAL, DE CAROLIS' VIEWS AND OURS ARE THE SAME ON THE BASIC ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO US IN THE ITALIAN SCENE. HE IS UNCOMPROMISINGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST AND IS AN OUTSPOKEN DEFENDER OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS. HE ALSO FAVORS REFORM AND RENEWAL OF THE DC, AND PUTS PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON IMPROVING THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PARTY'S EFFICIENCY AND BROADENING ITS OUTLOOK. DESPITE THESE IMPORTANT AND ATTRACTIVE ATTRIBUTES, DE CAROLIS DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY TO HAVE MUCH IMPACT ON THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE OR THE DC PARTY AT LEAST IN THE SHORT TERM. HE TAKES PRIDE IN HIS INDEPENDENCE, PARTICULARLY IN THE FACT THAT HE GOT ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT WITHOUT ANY HELP FROM (OR EVEN AGAINST THE WISHES OF) THE PARTY ORGANIZATION. HE IS OPENLY CRITICAL OF THE PARTY LEADERSHIP AND SEEMS DISINCLINED TO WORK WITHIN THE PARTY STRUCTURE. IN A GROUP THAT IS NOT KNOWN FOR ITS MODESTY, HE HAS HIGH OPINION OF HIS OWN IMPORTANCE AND MAKES NO SECRET OF IT. THESE PERSONALITY TRAITS CLEARLY LIMIT HIS EFFECTIVENESS WITHIN THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM. IN ADDITION, SOME WITHIN THE DC STILL MISTRUST HIM FOR

HIS FORMER RIGHTIST CONNECTIONS (IN 1970 HE JOINED THE
"SILENT MAJORITY," AND ASSOCIATION OF THE EXTREME RIGHT,
BUT SOON RECOGNIZED THAT THIS WAS A MISTAKE AND
RESIGNED). VOLPE

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